

The
WHITE PINE
SERIES OF
Architectural Monographs
Volume V *Number 4*

DESIGN FOR A
COMMUNITY CENTRE
BUILDING

To be built of
WHITE PINE

With report of the Jury of Architects
Walter H Kilham : Waddy B Wood
Dwight H Perkins : E J Russell
H Van Buren Magonigle

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An Architectural
MONOGRAPH

on a
COMMUNITY CENTRE
BUILDING

To be built of White Pine

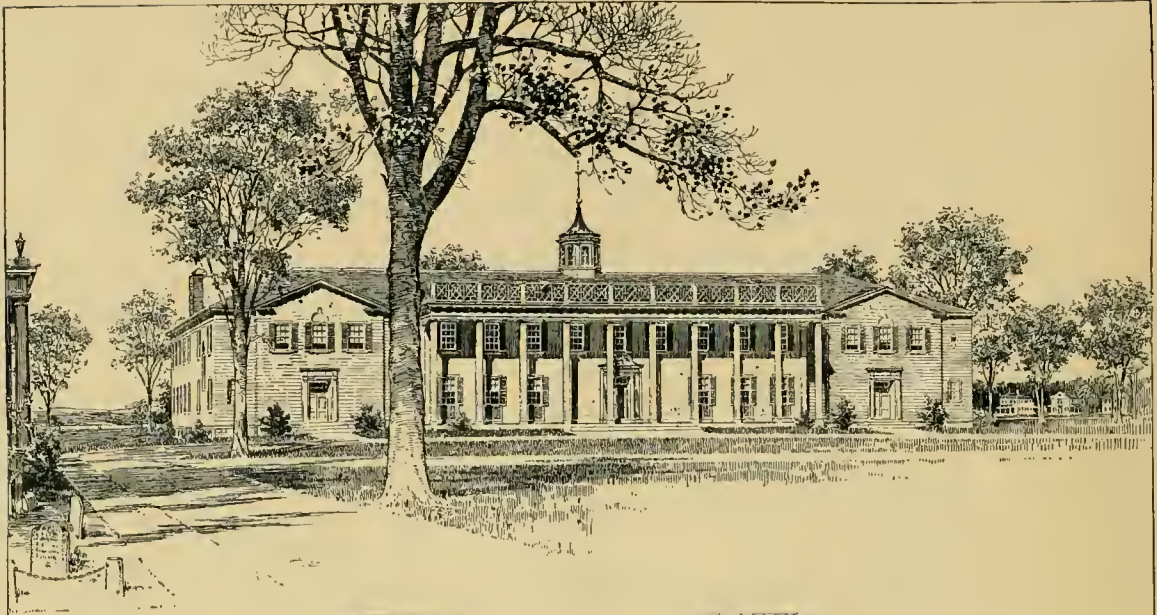
Competitive Drawings

With report of the Jury of Architects

Walter H Kilham: Waddy B Wood
Dwight H Perkins: E J Russell
H Van Buren Magonigle

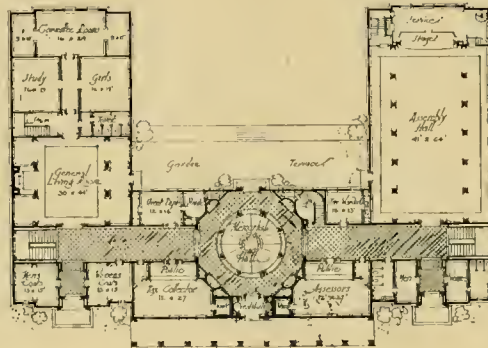
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and The Brickbuilder
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1919*

THE WHITE PINE MONOGRAPH SERIES

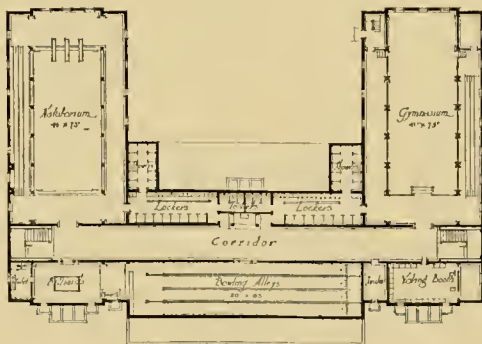


Design for a COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING

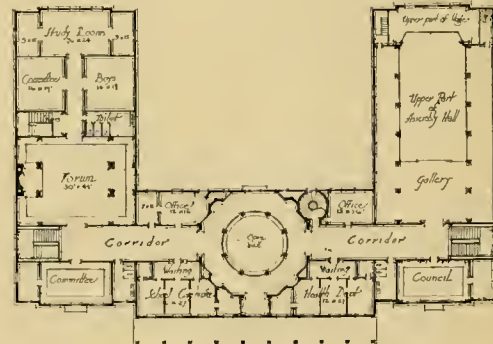
SUBMITTED



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BASMENT PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

FIRST PRIZE DESIGN

Submitted by Maurice Feather and Niels H. Larsen, Boston, Mass.

The WHITE PINE SERIES of ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION SUGGESTING THE
ARCHITECTURAL USES OF WHITE PINE AND ITS
AVAILABILITY TODAY AS A STRUCTURAL WOOD

VOL. V

AUGUST, 1919

No. 4

A COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING

REPORT OF THE JURY OF AWARD OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL
WHITE PINE ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

Judged at the Biltmore, New York, N. Y., May 23 and 24, 1919

PROBLEM: The design is for a Community Center Building and a Civic Center Group Plan for a town with a present population of about 5,000 and the probability of steady growth. The town is situated on the shore of a river which flows from east to west. 2,000 feet back from and parallel to the shore line the interurban trolley and the steam railroads are located on contiguous rights-of-way. The Civic Center shall extend from the railroads to the shore line, and shall be of a width determined by the competitor. The town is "somewhere" in New England. The Civic Center is created by the demolition of old buildings not especially valuable, but the remaining structures surrounding the public areas are of painted White Pine, in the character so well developed in that part of our country. Large elm trees predominate. The land slopes gradually down from the railroads to the water level, a descent of about 50 feet in 2,000 feet.

THE COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING shall contain: A town council chamber, offices for the town officials, and a room for permanent voting booths; an assembly hall to seat 700 persons, equipped with a stage and a motion picture machine. The floor of this room shall be flat to permit dancing and social gatherings. Refreshment facilities shall be provided in connection with the assembly hall. Club rooms for women, which shall include two committee rooms, suitable for small lecture or study purposes. Club room for girls. Club rooms for men, which shall include a forum for the discussion of items of community interest. Club room for boys. A general living-room, provided with tables for current periodicals, desks for writing, etc. A gymnasium and bowling alleys, with accessories; a natatorium with accessories. There shall be a large memorial vestibule or hall to preserve the records and to commemorate the deeds of the local men who served in the Great War.

A GROUP PLAN is required upon which shall be shown the following: Depots for passengers and for freights; an open market; buildings for stores and offices; a high school; three churches; a public library; an art museum and the **COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING**—the principal feature of this Competition—a municipal power, heat, light and laundry building; a public space for out-of-door meetings, speaking, band concerts and pageantry; an athletic and public recreation field; automobile parking spaces; and a boat landing.

Not all details are herein listed, particularly in the group plan. The competitor is expected to state his conception of what a Community Center Group should be.

The architectural style of the Community Building is left to the discretion of the contestant. The outside finish is to be of White Pine. By outside finish is meant: siding and corner boards; window sash, frames and casings; outside doors, door frames and casings; outside blinds; all exposed porch and balcony lumber; cornice boards, brackets, ornaments and mouldings, etc., not including shingles.

The size and the cost of the building, the equipment which it will contain, and the service which it will perform should be appropriate to the local needs. A sum equivalent to \$15.00 per capita has been raised for the building, and it is expected that some special features of the building may be provided for by individual gifts as memorials to men who have lost their lives in the War.

THE Jury of Award begs to report that they have carefully examined the sets of drawings submitted in the Fourth Annual Architectural Competition conducted by THE WHITE PINE SERIES OF ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS, for a Community Center Building, with a Civic Center Group Plan, and unanimously awarded the prizes and mentions.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the premiated designs, we would offer certain general observations upon the character of the competition as a whole. The programme is admirable in its timeliness, in its broad view of the problem, in the clarity and brevity of its statements; the restrictions imposed upon the competitors are only such as insure equitable conditions and a broad and fair judgment. We feel some surprise, therefore, that there was not

a more general participation, especially in view of the liberal prizes offered. If this be due to the fact that the required study of the group plan repelled or failed to interest a sufficient number of men, or that a majority of draftsmen would rather do something of a type with which they are familiar or for which they can readily find precedents to follow rather than to attack a problem which requires the exercise of original thought and of imagination, we would consider this a most unfortunate tendency. We are inclined to believe, from the general weakness shown by most of the group plans, either that the competitors failed to give this feature the importance that it is intended to have, and should have, under the programme, or that the study of a group plan of this nature did not interest them. If the young men who enter these

competitions will take the trouble to make a little research, they will find that the prize-winners in practically every competition of any sort which is held, including this, have given careful study to every aspect of their problems. One of the lessons to be learned in competitions is the development of good judgment in analysis and in an intelligent and interested weighing of the relative importance of the several elements of the problem, whether these be formally set forth in a competitive programme or stated orally by a client in one's private office. It may be fairly stated that, with a few notable exceptions, the group plans were very poor and showed no grasp either of the importance of subjects of this sort or of their study and treatment, and we recommend the study of group planning to the careful attention of most of these competitors. On the other hand, taken as a whole, the competitors have very generally, and with comparatively few exceptions, seized what we may term the atmosphere of the subject of the competition so far as the Community Center Building itself is concerned. They have nearly all grasped the essential fact that this building is to be the social focus of a little community of 5,000 people—in short, a village—and nearly all of them have given their buildings the character appropriate to a village. In writing the programme, it was intended to express the idea that the act of voting, one of the most important, even sacred duties of the citizen, should be elevated to the dignity of a ceremony or rite, and that the exercises of the suffrage should take place in a prominent space, such as a memorial room or a forum, not in a dark basement space, which many competitors seemed to think adequate for the purpose.

It is doubtless too much to expect that the group of young men represented by these competitors should at once grasp all the needs of such a building as this, particularly when the problem has in no sense yet become standardized. A few points, however, are evident to any student of the times. One is that women and men must be placed on a practical basis of equality as far as accommodations are concerned, and women must be given absolutely equal rights in and access to such main features as the gymnasium and swimming pool. Another concerns itself with the intensive study which must necessarily be given to the matter of economical administration of an actual building of this sort, which can be brought about only by compact planning and a room arrangement which allows supervision to be done by the least possible number of paid employees.

A study of the different schemes, however,

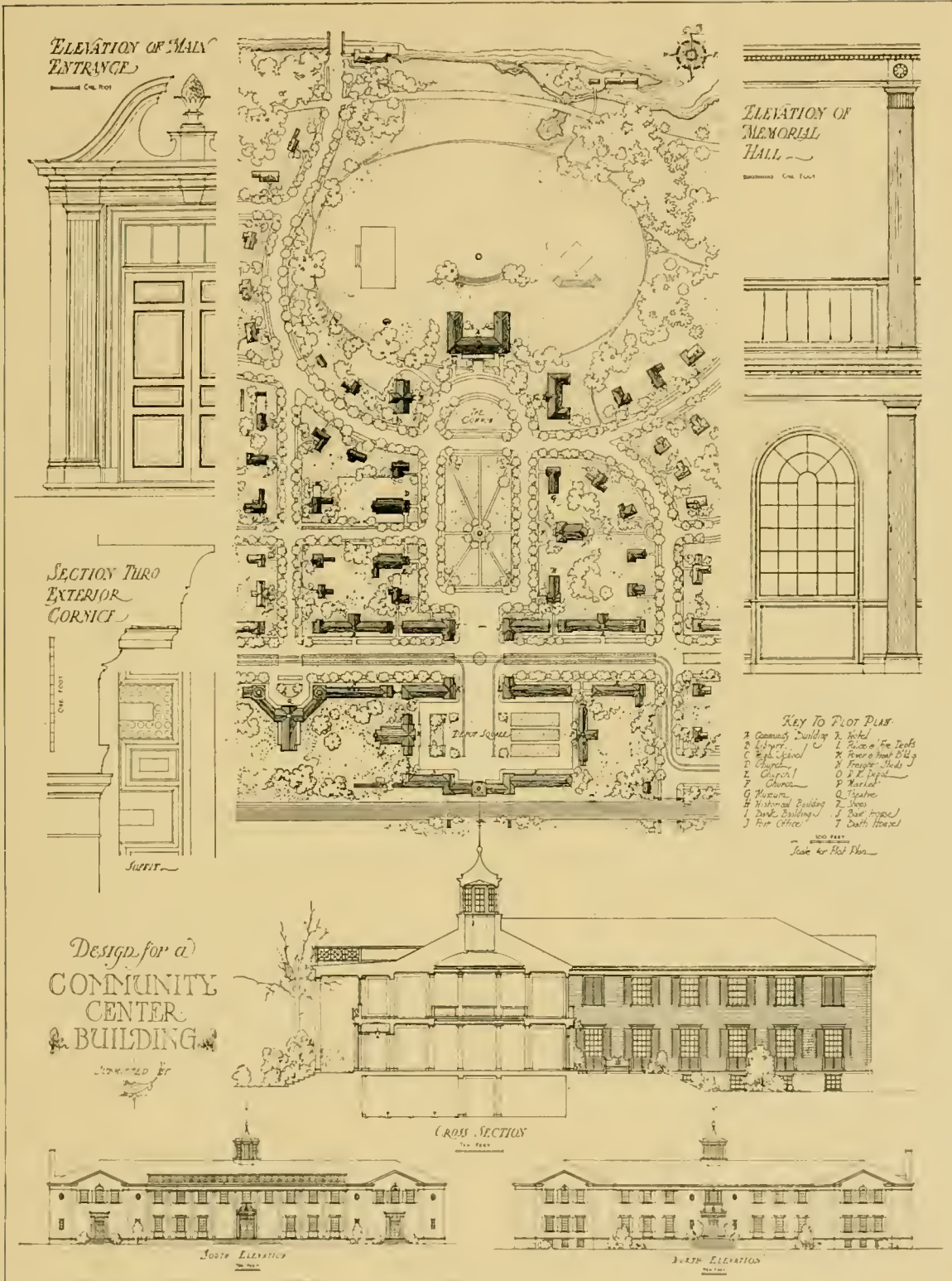
is of interest in showing how the majority of minds would solve the problem. These schemes group themselves into three classes: (A) the T shape, consisting of a front building with a rear wing, perpendicular to it, containing generally the auditorium and possibly the gymnasium or pool underneath; (B) a plan with two separate wings for the larger units of the plan; and (C) all others.

Of the ten designs placed, seven followed with some variations the first scheme, two (of which one gained the first prize) the second, and one the third, a clear majority which seems to establish, as far as may be, the first scheme as a standard form of community house plan. Varying ideas as to sizes of gymnasiums, swimming pools, etc., will, in practice, inevitably modify this arrangement, for a building of this kind is one of the most "pernickety" with which architects have to deal; nevertheless, it is probably the most compact and easily administered plan which can be devised. The two-wing plan would require much more supervision and would meet the needs of a much larger town than one of 5,000 people. The third type of plan, which might be called the "hinge type," is on the whole rather difficult to plan and complicated to construct, so that its general use is not probable.

The studies of these types by bright and enthusiastic young men cannot fail to be of a real and timely usefulness to the profession.

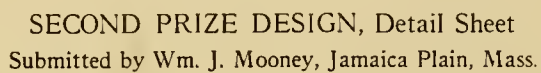
FIRST PRIZE DESIGN. We find the virtues of general grasp, character in mass and in detail, and the atmosphere of the problem pre-eminent in the drawing we have given the first prize. In the group plan the sense of scale is particularly fine. The authors have realized that they are planning the community center of a village, not a Champs Elysées nor a Mall fit for the City of Washington. It is orderly without being stiff, sufficiently formal in its principal features without frigidity. The position of the Community Center Building itself, standing as it does almost midway between the railway and the river, is admirable. The authors have known when to discard symmetry for balance, and they appreciate the value of curved lines in rural planning. The shops and markets are placed along a broad street running parallel with the railroad and thus do not intrude themselves upon the more important structures in the group plan. The scale of the space around which the principal buildings are grouped is so good and the common sense which it expresses so evident that we highly commend both; instead of using up all of the terrain for one tremendous

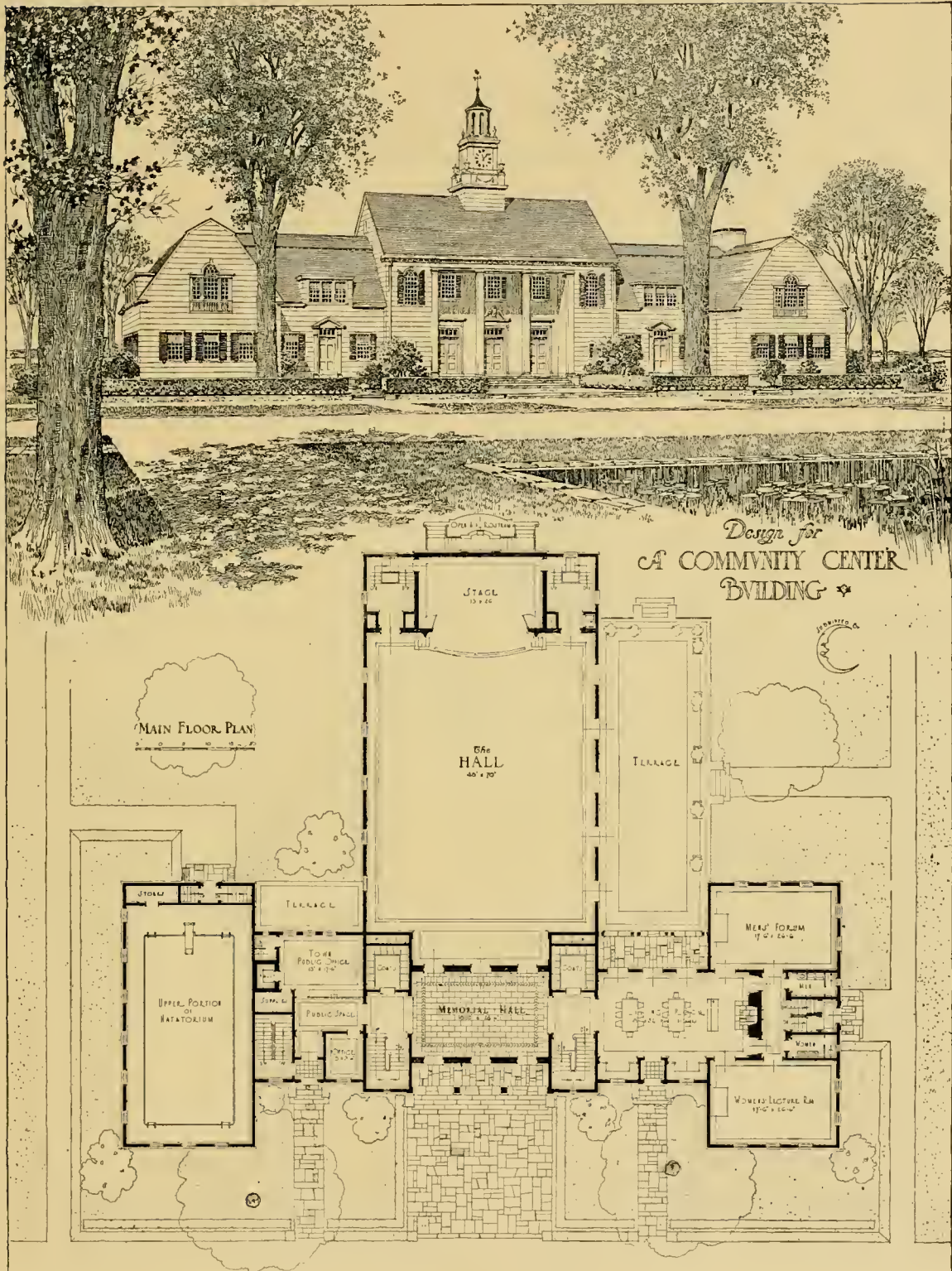
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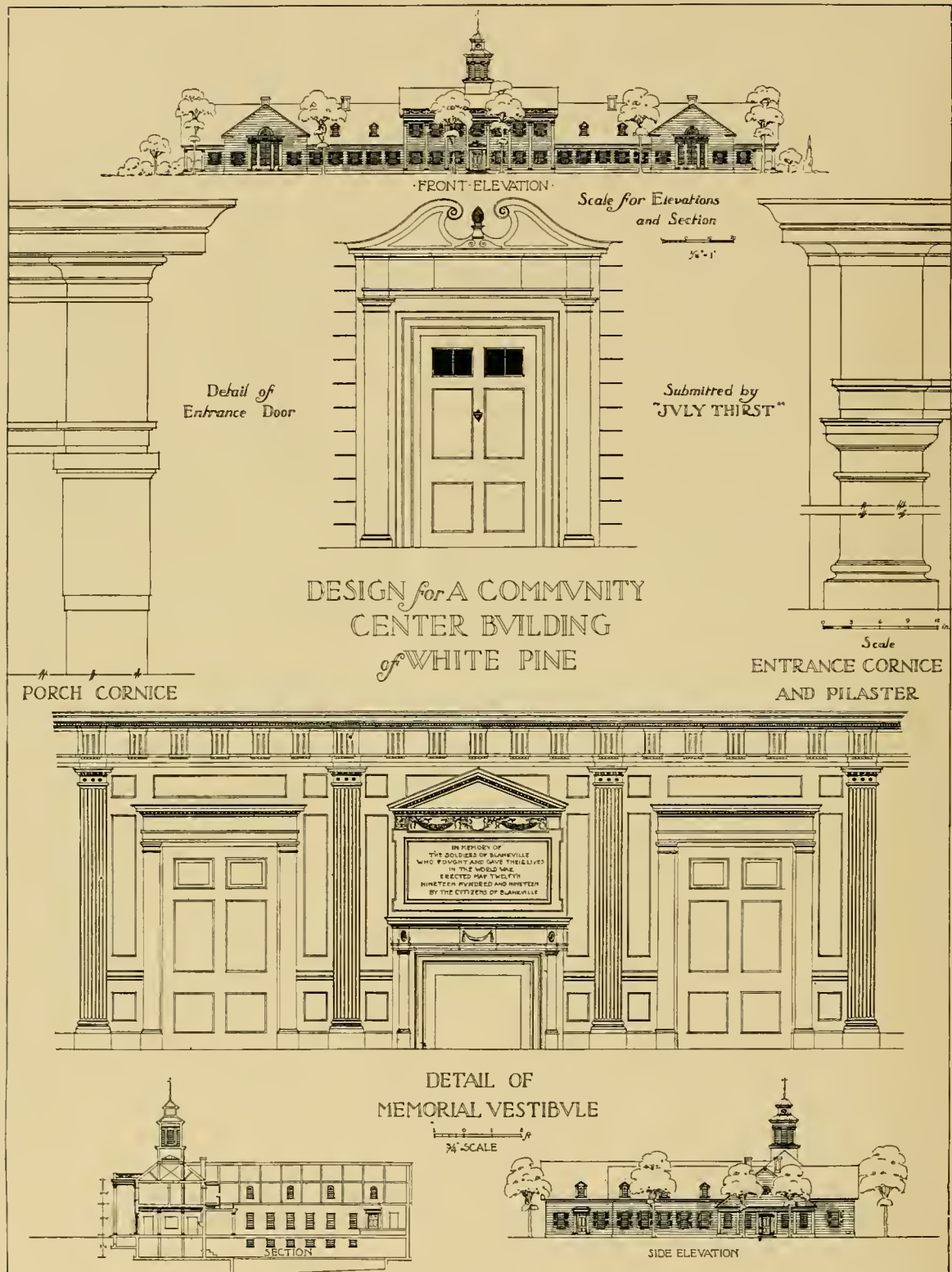


FIRST PRIZE DESIGN, Detail Sheet

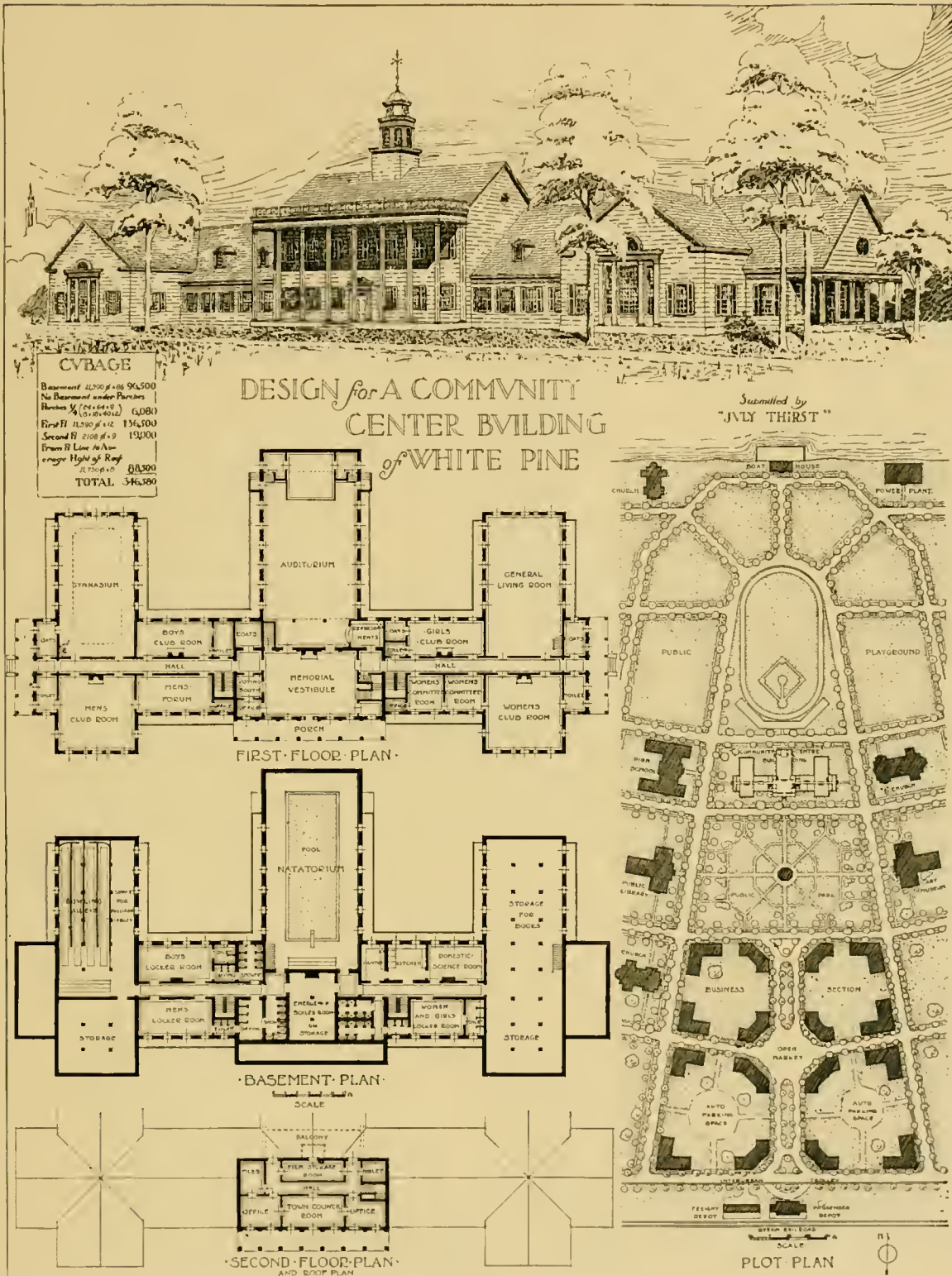
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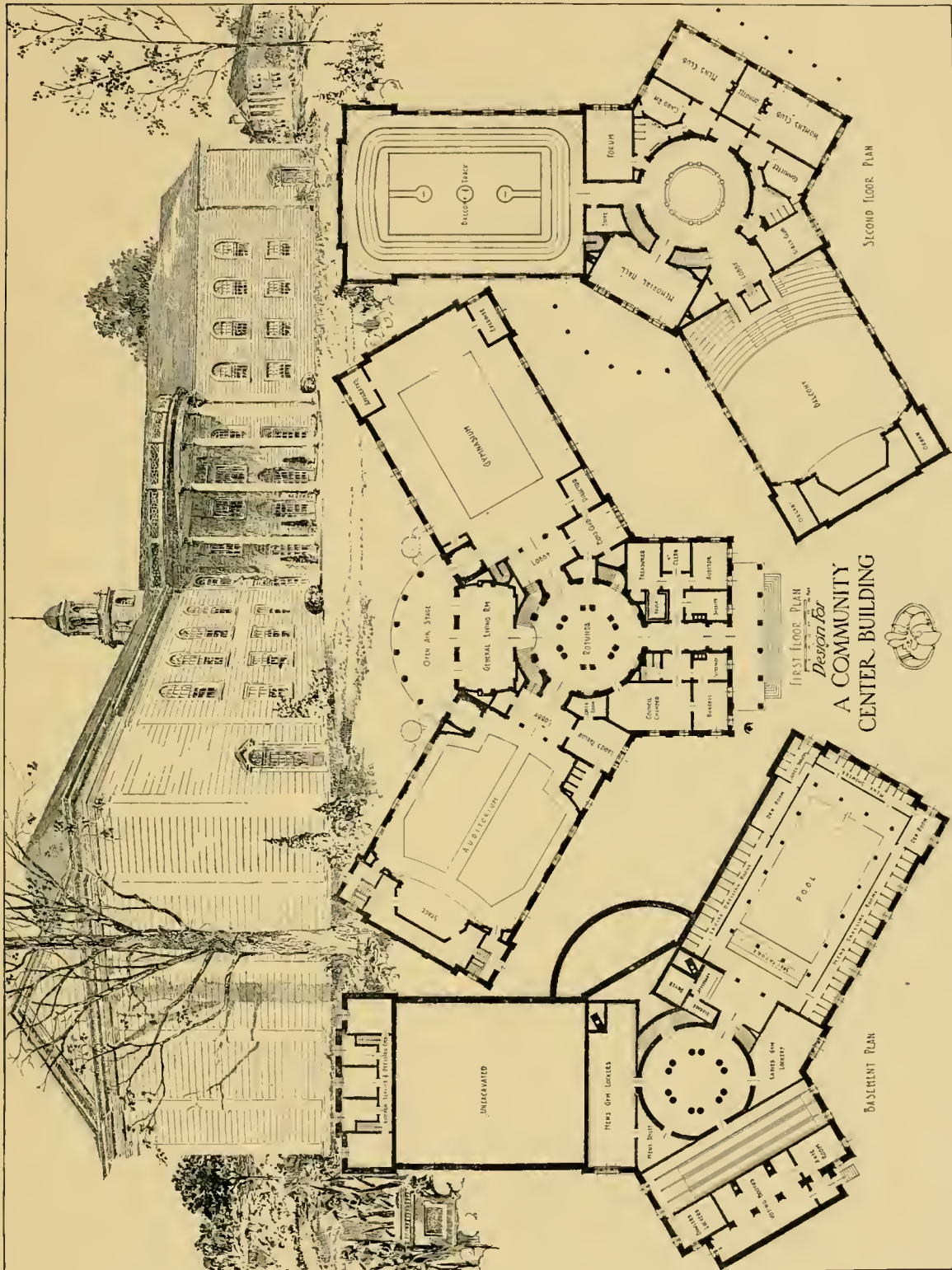






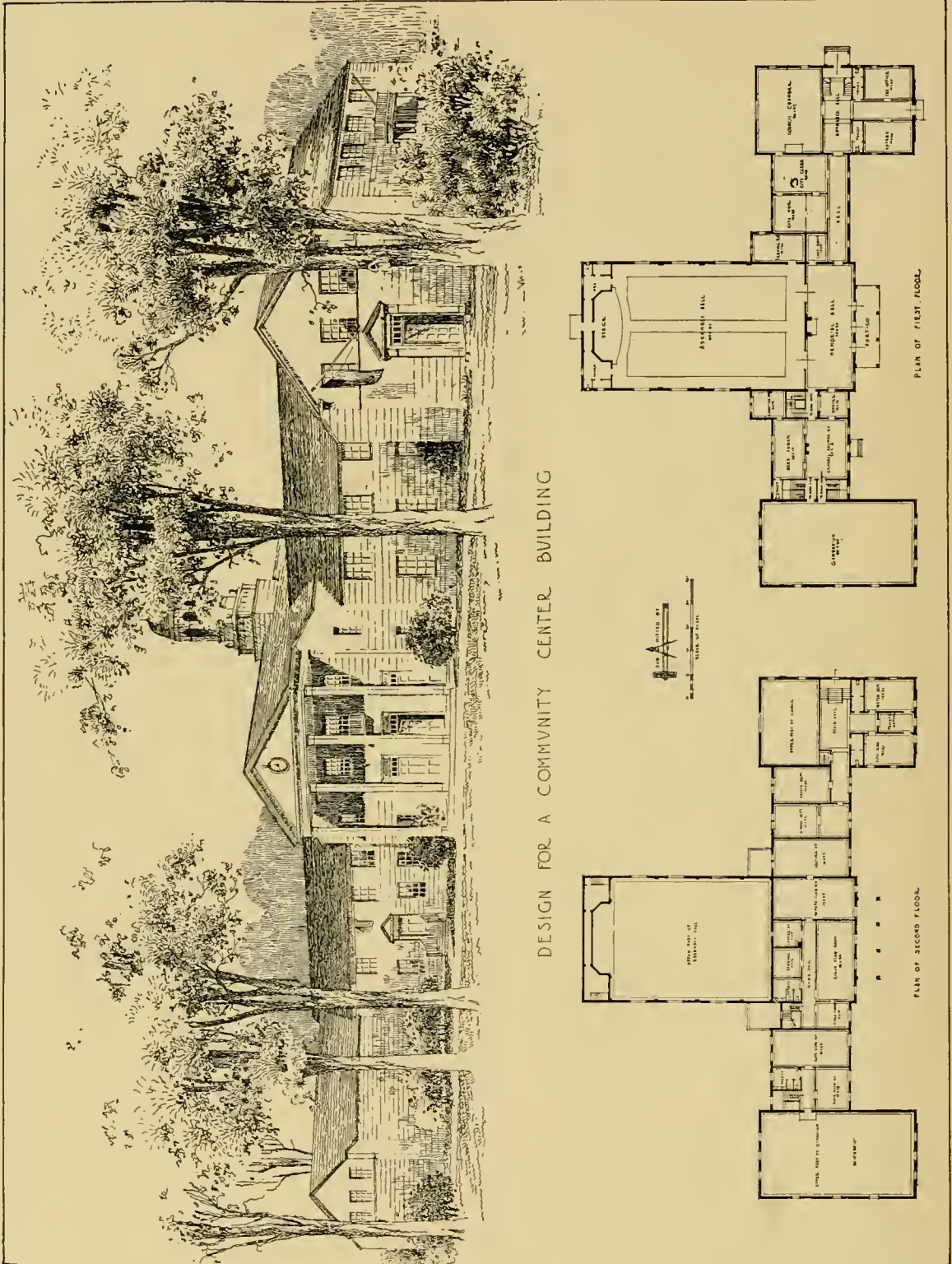
THIRD PRIZE DESIGN, Detail Sheet
Submitted by Leslie W. Devereux, New York, N. Y.





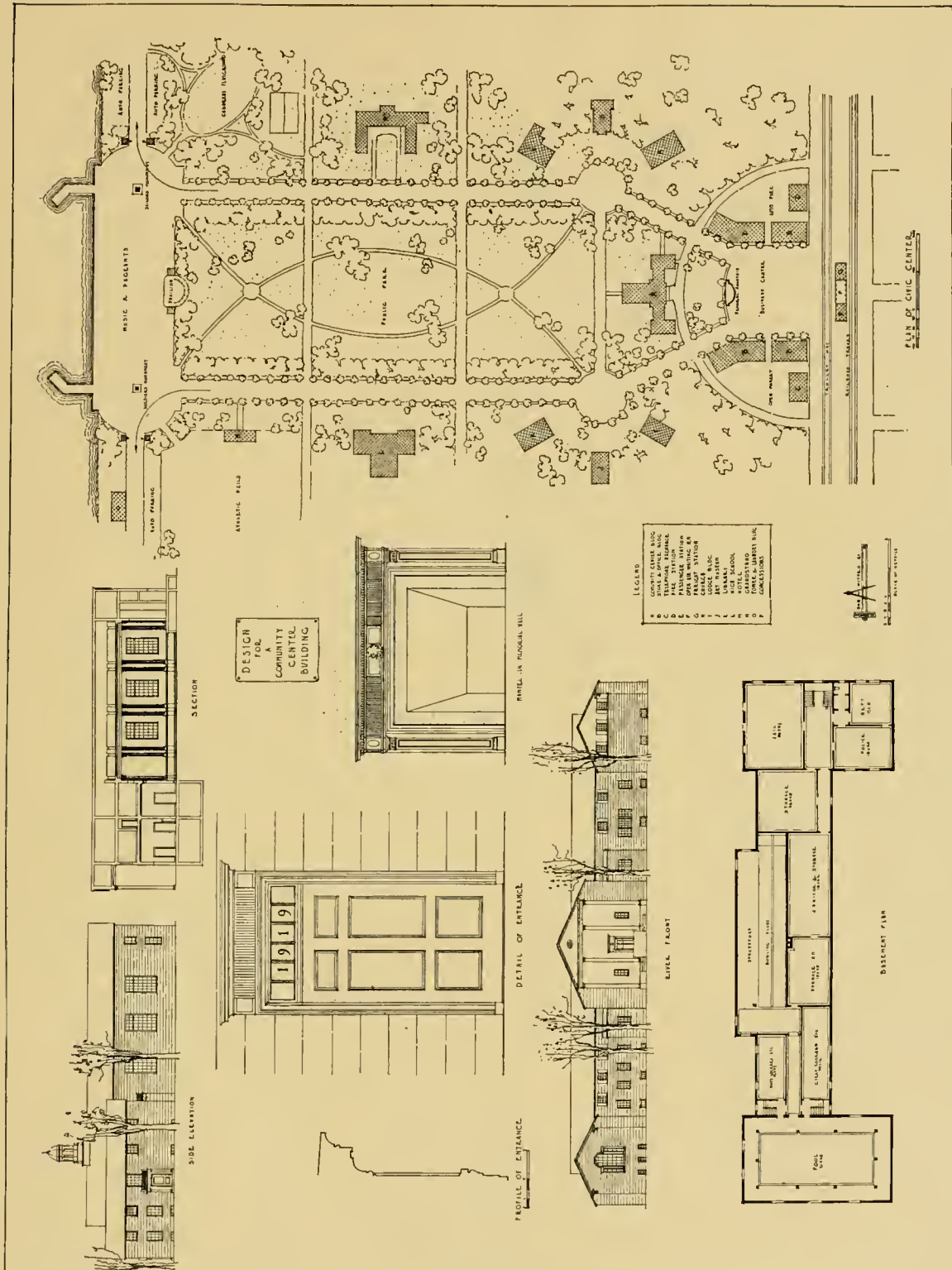
FOURTH PRIZE DESIGN

Submitted by Frederick C. Disque, Albert A. Farnham and Maurice E. Kressley, State College, Pa.

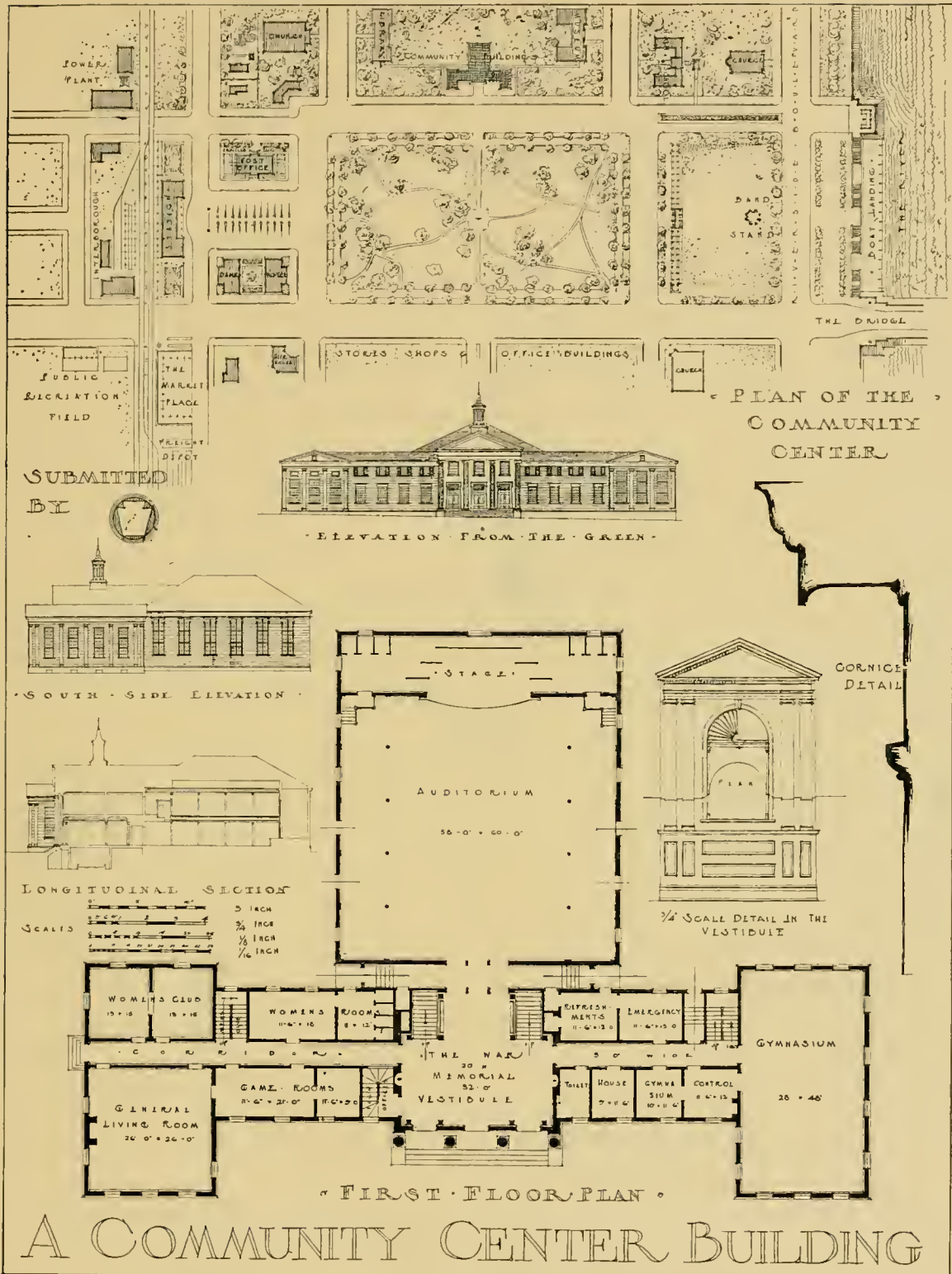


SPECIAL MENTION

Submitted by Paul R. Williams, Los Angeles, Calif.

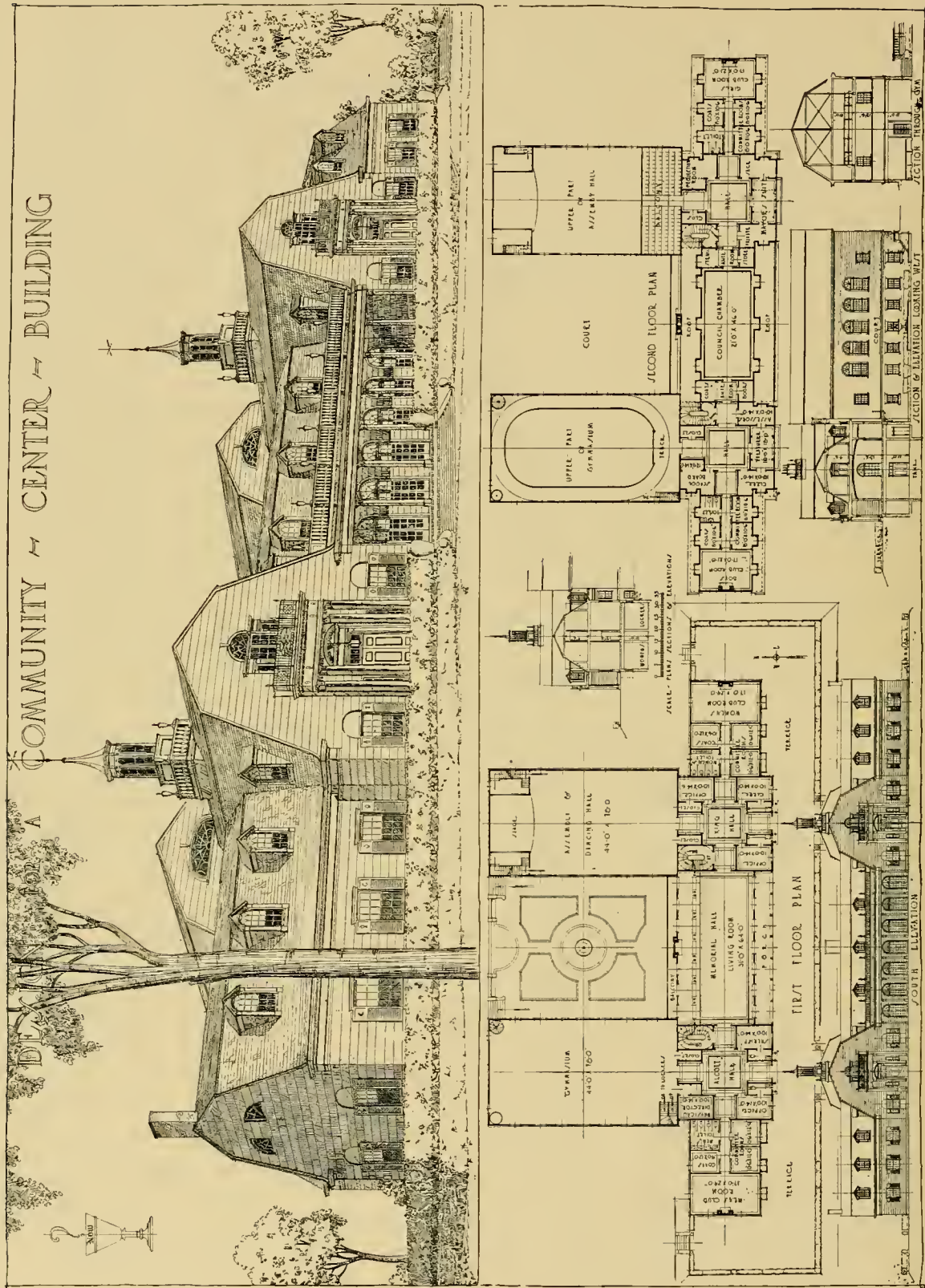


SPECIAL MENTION, Detail Sheet
Submitted by Paul R. Williams, Los Angeles, Calif.



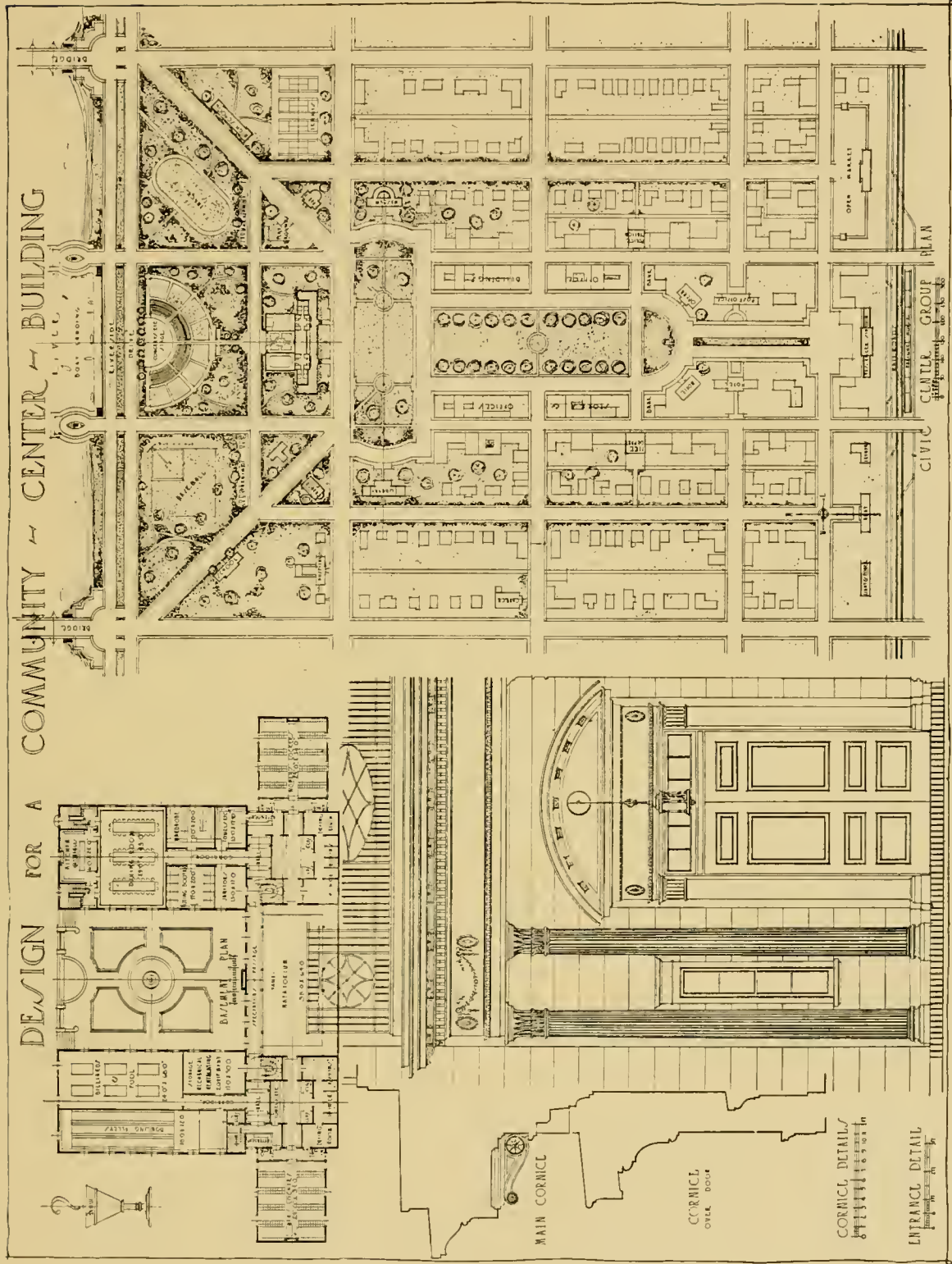
MENTION, Detail Sheet

Submitted by Henry Herbert Dean, New York, N. Y.

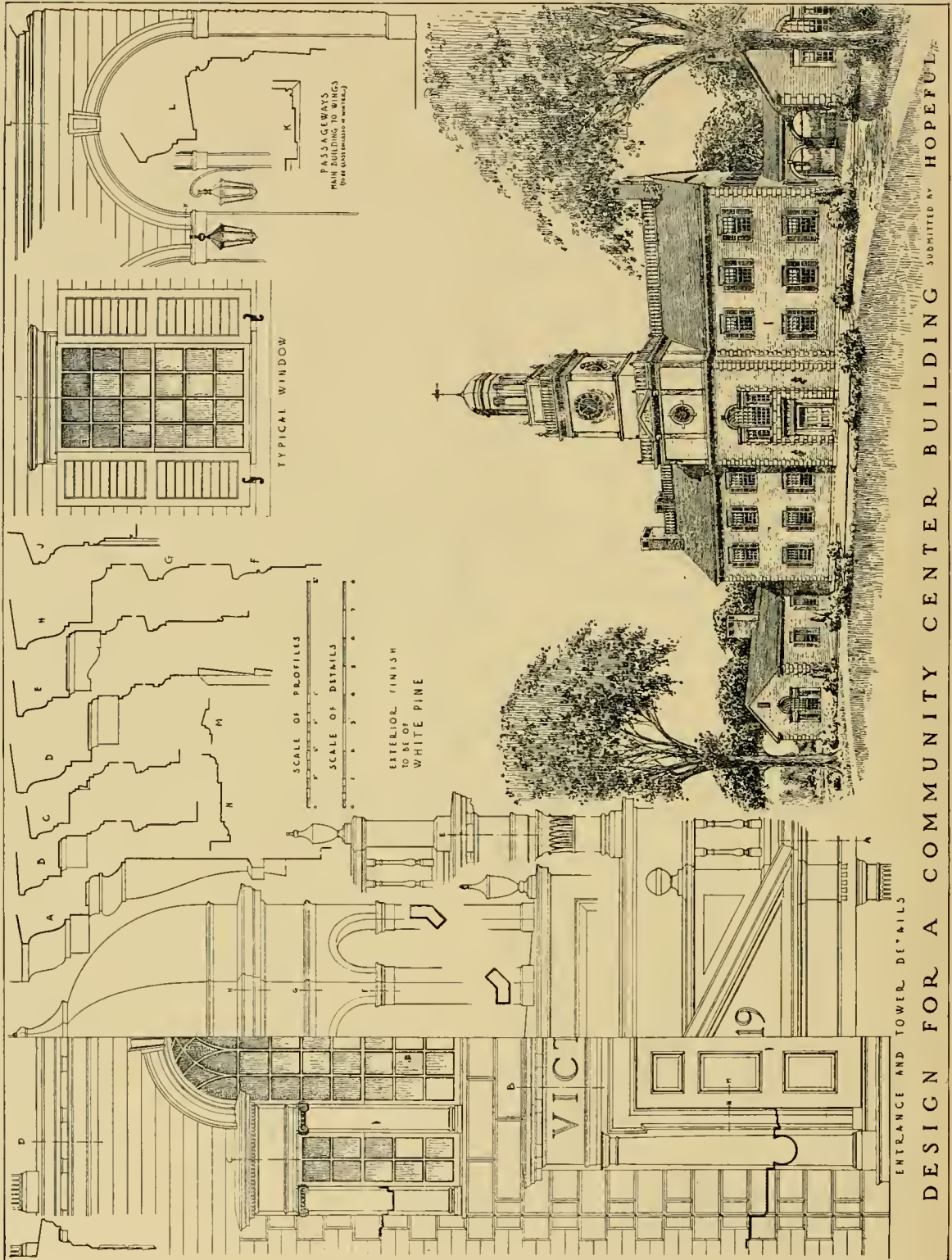


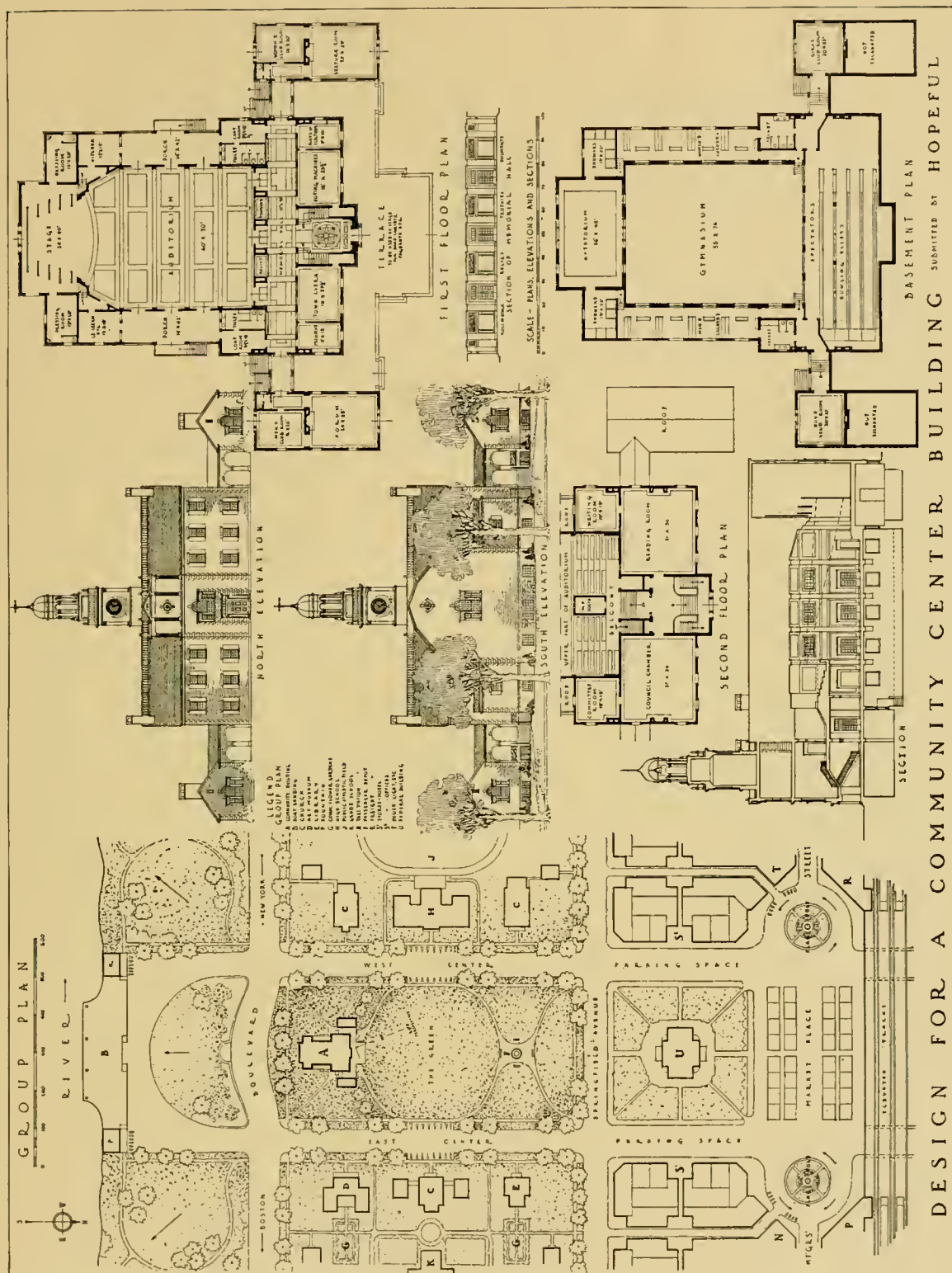
MENTION

Submitted by Clarence E. Wechsberger, Chicago, Ill.



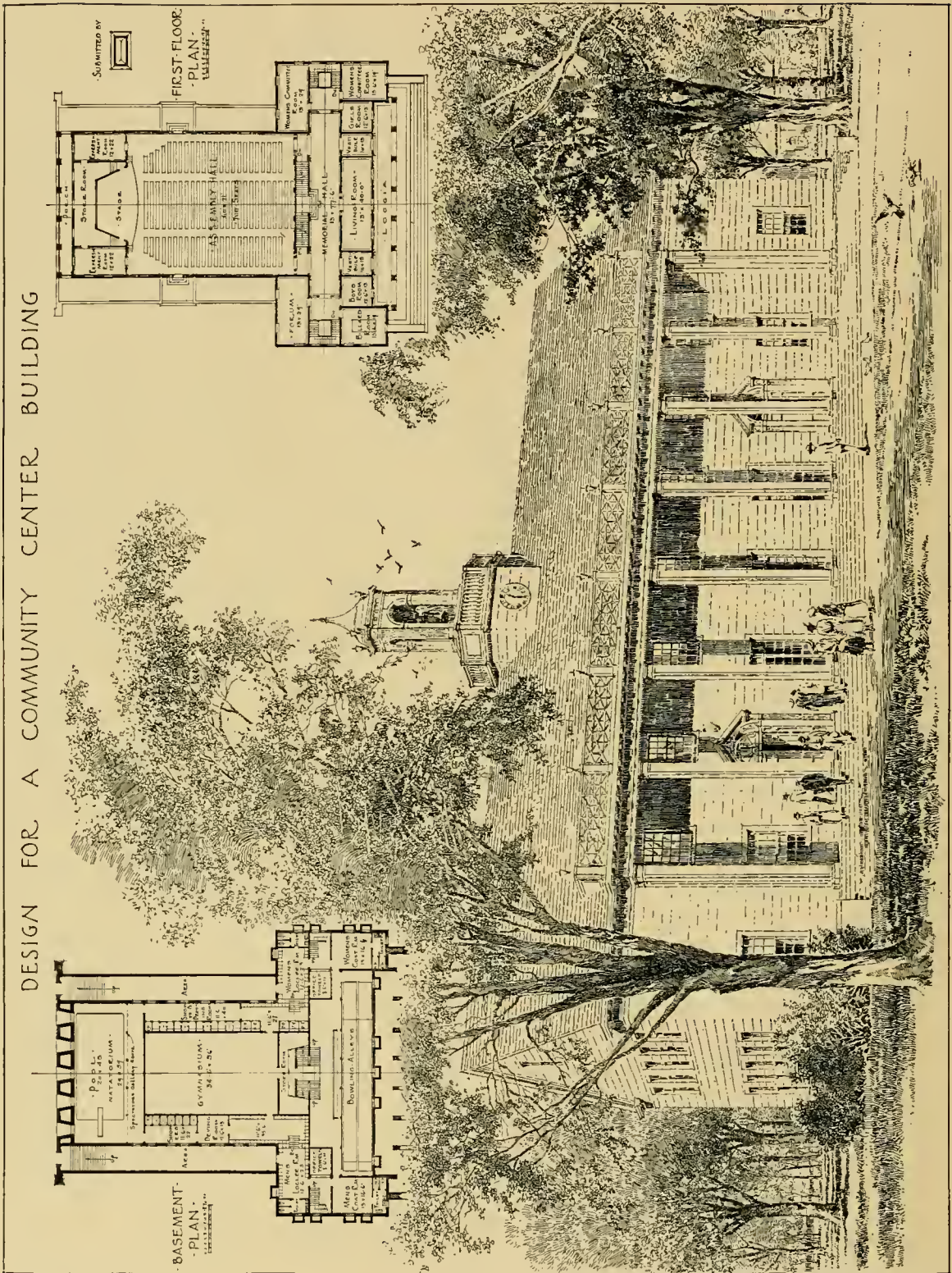
MENTION, Detail Sheet
Submitted by Clarence E. Wechselsberger, Chicago, Ill.





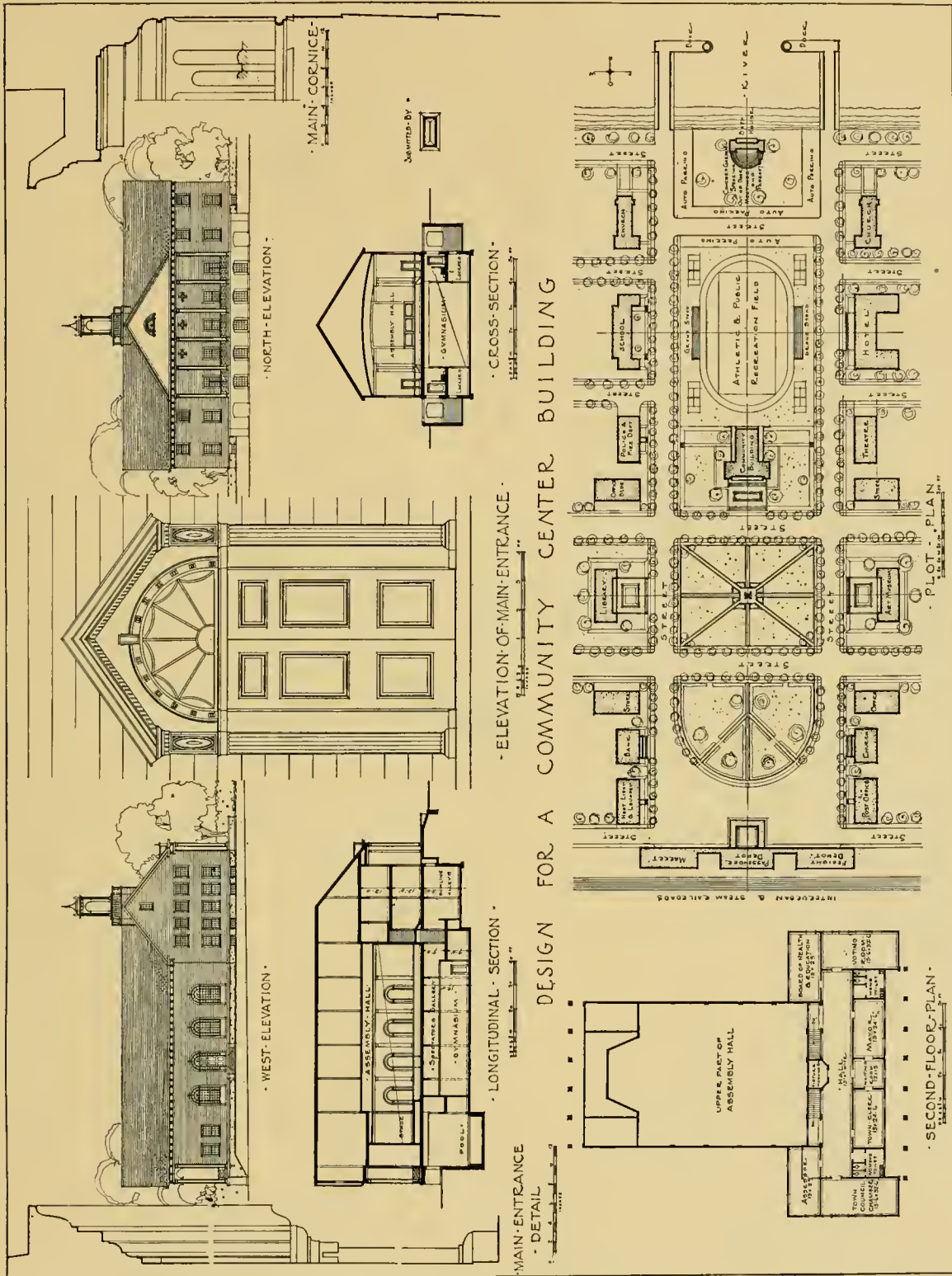
MENTION, Detail Sheet

Submitted by Carl C. Tallman and R. Douglas Steele, Auburn, N. Y.



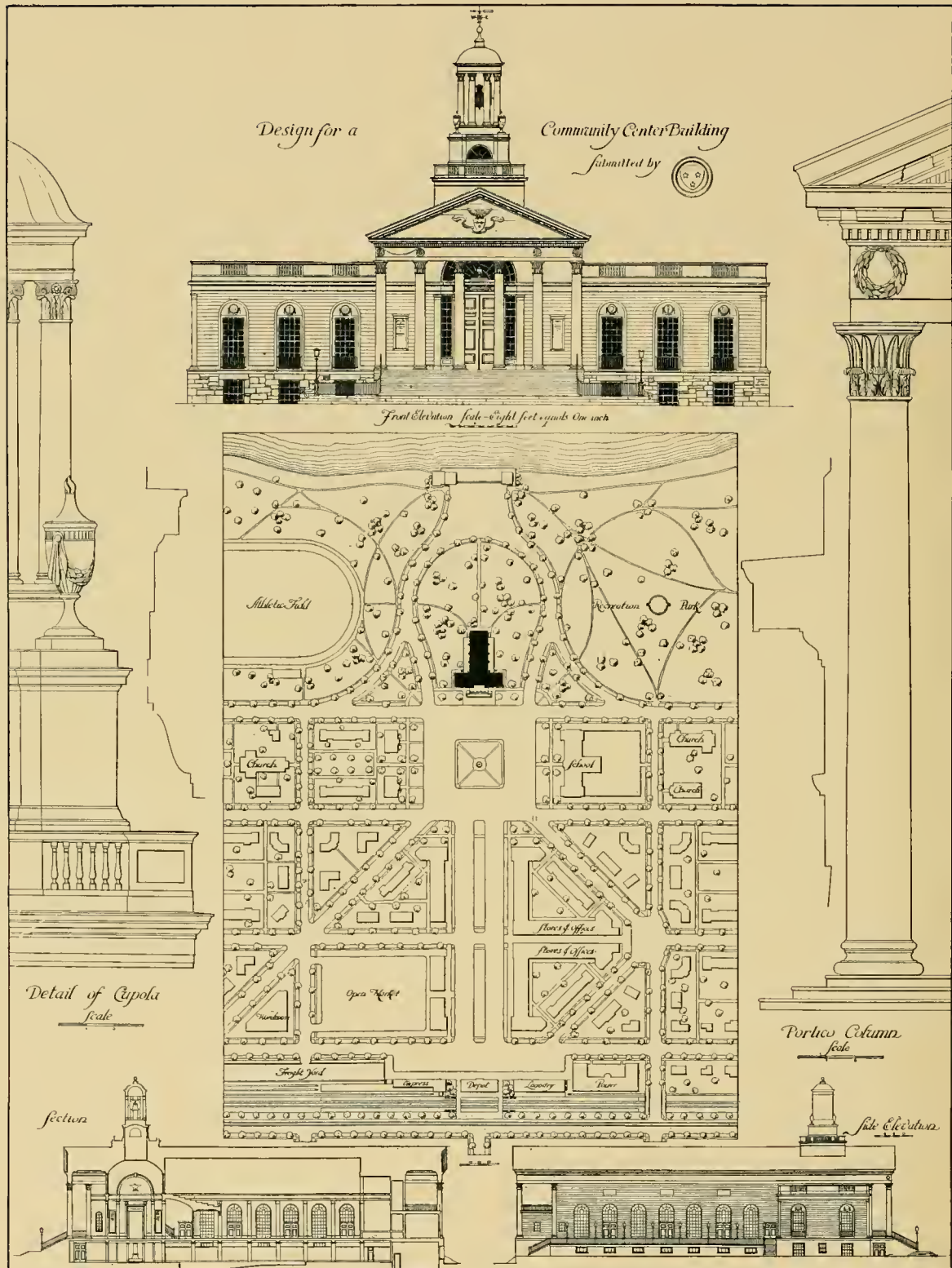
MENTION

Submitted by E. J. Maier, T. E. King and F. Lange, Toledo, Ohio



MENTION, Detail Sheet

Submitted by E. J. Maier, T. E. King and F. Lange, Toledo, Ohio



MENTION, Detail Sheet

Submitted by Charles Mink and O. R. Eggers, New York, N. Y.

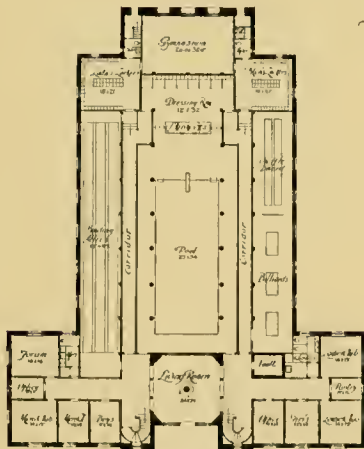


Design for a Community Center Building

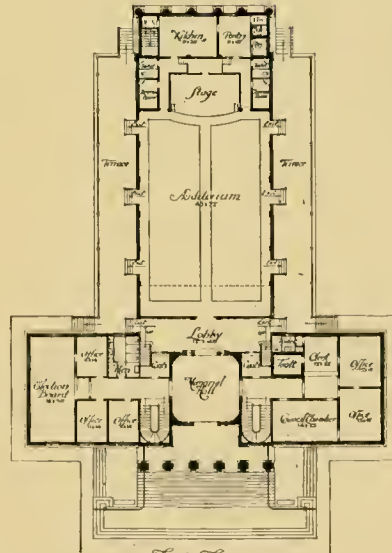
Submitted by



MCMXIX



Basement



First Floor

Scale for Plans

MENTION

Submitted by Charles Mink and O. R. Eggers, New York, N. Y.

square, the authors have saved a large area for a broad lawn, beyond the Community Building, sloping to the river, for pageantry, athletics and the other outdoor activities of community life. The Community Center Building has a well lighted, well balanced plan. The various services are well placed, and the entrances and exits are particularly well arranged for the several uses to which the building will be put. We find the character of the building and its presentation altogether delightful. The exigencies of wood construction, if not of structural ethics, probably allow the two-story rotunda to float lightly on the top of the bowling alleys and corridors of the basement. Nevertheless, we ourselves, in a building of this presumable simplicity, would have preferred to discard the interior rotunda if it became in any sense an architectural misfit.

SECOND PRIZE DESIGN. In the design awarded second place the distinct atmosphere of a New England village is maintained and the design both subordinates itself and characterizes the atmosphere. The group plan, while convenient and logical, does not depart from the scale of a New England village subdivision as to streets, size of buildings or of open spaces. The commercial facilities are grouped around the station, and the Community Center Building, as the important focal point, is at the base of the composition and opposite the entrance to the village. In this design as well as in a number of others, the river front is used to advantage. Under the conditions of the problem, it is the opinion of the Jury that the river is quite as important a feature as the railroads, and those designers who have developed that possibility have secured a very favorable consideration by the Jury. The plan of the Community Center Building is straightforward, convenient and logical. The features of the plan are evident and do not need special mention—with one exception: that is, the position of the voting booths, to which reference has already been made.

THIRD PRIZE DESIGN. The design placed as third is not as successful as the first two on account, among other things, of the separation of the community center from the business center by a park, which seems to result in the subdivision of the entire tract into four separate spots. The business center seems too formal for a village of this population. The two converging main streets are well located and would afford pleasing vistas to the river. The location of the public playgrounds and the athletic fields is good, but the Jury regrets that the author

has not taken greater advantage of the possible development of the river front. To be specific, in a small detail the balancing of a church with a power plant is not fortunate.

The exterior of the building is highly pleasing and thoroughly expresses the idea of a village community center, and is, moreover, entirely appropriate to its use. The plan of the building is one of the strongest features of the design. The position of the auditorium is correct and it is well proportioned. The gymnasium is well lighted and ventilated. The wing of the building adjacent to the general living room and women's rooms is also well designed, and the porches at each end are very attractive features. The position of the voting booths is good, though more light would be desirable, and the separation of the town offices in the second floor of the central part of the building is very good, indeed.

FOURTH PRIZE DESIGN. The fourth prize design is an interesting variant. It is noteworthy principally for the admirable community use it makes of the river frontage. A riverside park, bathing beach, tennis courts and athletic field are here provided. The conception of the author appears to have been that the Community Center Building should be placed in close relation to the river front, and would seem to have been so planned as to command views up and down the river. The plan of the building is interesting, but the *poché* does not express a frame building. The treatment of the ends of the two wings, while it would undoubtedly be impressive if executed in stone, would be exceedingly bleak in clapboards. In the general plan an effort seems to have been made to plant out these two uninteresting ends, a device which should have been made unnecessary.

SPECIAL MENTION. While the programme did not call for any first mention, the solution was so good in this case that the Jury felt it to be worthy of special commendation. The principal criticism of the group plan is the lack of scale in some particulars, and the plans of the building, while workable, are amateurish. With these exceptions, it is an excellent expression of a Community Center Group, has the charm of a New England town, and the Community Building is unmistakably a wooden structure.

WALTER H. KILHAM	} Jury of Award
H. VAN BUREN MAGONIGLE	
DWIGHT H. PERKINS	
E. J. RUSSELL	
WADDY B. WOOD	

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